Australian Native Orchid Society - Macarthur Group

FEBRUARY 2013 **Edited by Tony Asquith** mail: aaasquith@bigpond.com. Phone 4625 9874

President Mr. W. Southwell (ph. 46818589) **Postal Address**:- **43 Strickland Cres.,**
Secretary: Mr. J. English (Ph.96079809) **ASHCROFT . 2168.**
Treasurer: Mrs. C. Asquith (Ph. 46259874)
Life Member: Mr. J. Riley
Conservation Officer: R. Hanman

Next Meeting: THURSDAY , 21st MARCH, 2013

Venue: BIRRAWA HALL
FITZPATRICK ROAD, **Doors open 7.15pm, benching closes 7.45pm, meeting starts 8pm.**
Mt. ANNAN.

President's Message.
Hi to all. Last month's guest speaker Karen Somerville from Mt. Annan Botanical Gardens gave an interesting talk on her research on terrestrial orchids. Hopefully, her research attracts sufficient funding for her to continue.
This month, The Orchid Tray Company will be attending our meeting giving us an opportunity of obtaining orchid related products for our hobby. Please give them your support. They come a fair way to bring their products to us.
Congratulations to Ross Morrison for February's Plant of the Night.

The club now has Metarex Snail Bait – ring Margaret if you need some!

Just a short note about Growing Competition – 29 plants were issued in November, only three have turned up on monthly benching. This is a FUN competition – please bring your plants in – it does establish bragging rights and in this competition you are allowed to ignore judges comments!

Good Growing....Wally

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MEETING HELD 21 February, 2013

Sorry, I forgot to get the minutes from our <u>esteemed</u> secretary.

1. **Meeting Opened: 8**pm**,** and the President welcomed members.
2. **Apologies: Carol Asquith and some others**
3. **Minutes from Previous Meeting:**
4. **Proposed by:** **Seconded by:**
5. **Business Arising from the Minutes:** Nil
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Presented by Tony

   Prosposed by: Tony Asquith **Seconded by:**

- **Inward Correspondence:**

  Outward Correspondence:

Delegate Report:

General Business:

The raffle was drawn, and the meeting closed..

Well it's that time of month when I go looking for some articles to print, to add to members knowledge for growing native orchids...but it's getting harder with each year. Many well prepared newsletters/bulletins print lots of information relevant to their own members. There seems to be few orchid growers producing material, generally, for the hobby. I'm not sure how to fix this situation.

Benching Results February 2013

Dendrobium Species	Den schneiderae	Ross Morrison
	Den lichenafram	Ross Morrison
Dendrobium Hybrid	Den. Aussie Starlight	Ross Morrison
	Den. Jonathan Glory x Park Joy	Ross Morrison
Sarcanthinae Species	nil	
Sarcanthinae Hybrid	nil	
Bulbophyllum	Bulb. Schillerianum	Ross Morrison
Aust. Species Other	Dockrillia cucumerina	T. Cooke
	Dock. Bowmannii	W. & M. Southwell
	Aust. Hybrid Other	nil
Terrestrial Pterostylis	Pte. torquatii	W. & M. Southwell
Caladenia Species	nil	
Terrestrial Evergreen	Spiranthes australii	Ross Morrison
Diuris Species	nil	
Terrestrial Hybrid	nil	
Terrestrial Other	Chilloglottis diphyla	M. & W. Southwell
	Chilloglottis diphyla	T. Cooke
Australasian Species nil		
Australasian Hybrid	nil	
Novelty Class (50% or more)	nil	
Seedling First Flowering	nil	
Growing Competition 1	1st W. & M. Southwell	
	2nd. J. English	
Growing Competition 2	nil	

Plant of the night is Spiranthes australis grown by Ross Morrison.

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Culture Notes – February Les Nesbitt

Terrestrials

Repotting should be completed by the end of February as many tubers have shoots developing. For local orchids adapted to a dry January-March, I water lightly in February and increase watering in March.

The cauline group of greenhoods (*Diplodium*) from the eastern states are the first to shoot and ideally should have been repotted in January with watering commencing at the end of January. There are some 38 species in this group. Some come from high altitudes in NSW/Vic and flower there in February. We flower them in March/April in Adelaide.

Points to note about *Diplodiums*:

Flowering plants look different to non-flowering plants. Flowering plants have small pointed leaves on the flower stem. Nonflowering plants have a rosette of rounded leaves flat on the ground.

They flower early in the growing season. Most flower in autumn with a few stragglers in winter. None flower in spring.

The rosette plants multiply and are easy to grow in regular terrestrial mixes. Often there are only a small percentage of flowering plants.

They are not easy to flower in Adelaide. Start watering the March flowerers at the end of January. Flowers abort if too hot and/or too dry. Keep pots out of the sun until March. The local species are easier to flower.

Poor tuber development from flowering plants is common. These plants sometimes die after flowering.

By the end of February all pots should be in their growing area for the coming season. A new layer of chopped she-oak needles is put on top of terrestrial pots in summer so make sure all pots are replenished. If the names on labels are starting to fade rewrite them before the name is lost. Remember to pot up any spare tubers for raffles and stalls later in the year.
Terrestrial growers all have their favourite mix that works for them. They vary from premium potting mix, to sand, buzzer chip, mountain soil mix, to my mix of hills soil, sand & organic matter. The mix must be free draining in winter yet retain moisture in autumn and spring. Most growers reuse some of the old mix, (up to 50%) to which new ingredients are added including a little blood & bone fertiliser at repotting time in summer. Most of the orchids in cultivation prefer a slightly acid soil mix.
A terrestrial house should be sealed to keep out birds and animals and have shadecloth or wire mesh sides to allow the breeze to move through. I prefer a roof of angled 50% shadecloth. Other growers use a solid roof of plastic or fibreglass. A solid roof means you have to water your pots by hand, which is more work. It is very important that winter sun reaches your plants so site the shadehouse away from the winter shadows of buildings and evergreen trees. Galvanised mesh benching about 750mm high will deter slugs and snails and is a convenient height for observing the pots.

Epiphytes

Keep up the regular summer watering and fertilizing schedule this month. From mid-February the nights get noticeably longer so switch back to watering in the morning unless it is very hot. Some epiphytes make a burst of new growths in autumn. As the weather gets milder those pesky leaf eating and sucking pests breed up if not controlled. Keep a sharp eye out for evidence of damage or spray first if that is your style. I prefer to go out at night with a torch and catch the little blighters. Towards the end of the month potting-on can be done as root tips are still active. Dividing is best left until spring.

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(The following article has been re-produced from the ANOS Victorian Group Bulletin , March 2012 And I found it in Central Coast's Newsletter, August 2012 and 2010)

THE SHADECLOTH CONUNDRUM Richard Austin

Does the colour of shadecloth affect the way it performs; or is it purely a matter of aesthetics?
I pose this question given that dark colours tend to absorb heat, while light colours help reflect it. The best I could do to establish some form of practical result was hang light and dark, 70% shadecloth) samples side by side in direct sun exposure.

After ten minutes, readings with a digital thermometer showed the light beige cloth surface at **43**°C and the dark green cloth surface at 45.6°C with the (full sun) air temperature 35.6C. So far,so good. One hour later, the light beige cloth was 54.5°C and the dark green cloth 54.6°C, while the full sun temperature had dropped slightly to 34-9°C. Not so good!

The only advantage light coloured cloth appears to have in this area is being slightly slower in absorbing heat, and the plastic mesh certainly absorbs a lot of it! The next thing to establish was the temperature behind the cloth, in the shadow. Readings taken 100mm behind each sample after the one-hour period had the light cloth shadow at 32.1°C and the dark cloth shadow at 32.2°C, with the full sun temperature 34.9°C, so no significant difference here. Mind you, none was expected as both cloths had the same shade rating.

This rating, 50%, 60%, 70%, etc., is based on maximum light hitting the cloth at 90 degrees. At other angles, the shade level will be greater as the cloth's shadow is distorted. You can clearly see this by holding a torch behind the cloth and casting one shadow on a wall. Simply change the torch angle to visualise the effect. So let's look at this material more objectively. It has evolved from the old 'flat' weave structure to a more robust 'knitted' structure and, while it provides shade, its effect at lowering temperature depends on how it is used. Take a shadecloth sail or blind. This drops the ambient temperature by a few

degrees and promotes **a** cool environment because the area underneath is subject to shade and natural air movement
The more we enclose this, the more we risk increasing internal temperatures, in fact, **a** fully enclosed shadehouse can easily reach internal temperatures of 50°C+, much higher than the outside temperature. Here, the shadecloth restricts natural air movement and radiates its own absorbed heat. It is even more pronounced with a solid clear roof (screened with shadecloth in summer), as this stops the rising hot air from escaping. However, it does reduce sun exposure, which prevents foliage from burning.
It's a bit like putting on sunscreen... it stops us from burning, but doesn't make us cooler!

Naturally, many native orchids (for various reasons) need more protection than a simple shade sail, so some form of enclosure is necessary. How this is structured will greatly influence the heat retained. The main advantage a light coloured cloth could have, is higher reflected light levels inside the shadehouse, offering improved light conditions, particularly in the duller months. Cloth quality also varies -you get what you pay for and, when all is said and done, this product does exactly what its name suggests - it provides shade. Keeping the shade it creates cool - when the heat's on, is the real story!

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Dockrillia striolata (H.G.Reichb.) Rauschert 1983

(Dockrillia striolata ssp. striolata)
(Dockrillia striolata ssp. chrysantha)
(Dockrillia banksii)

Other names
Dendrobium teretifolium Lindley 1810
Dendrobium striolalum H.G.Reichb. 1857
Dendrobium milliganii F. Muell. 1859
Callista striolata (H.G.Reichb.) Kuntze 1891

Dockrillia striolata was named from the Latin word *stri'a* meaning marked by longitude lines and channels and has the common name of the Streaked Rock Orchid.

This orchid is one of the smaller terete-leafed *Dockrillias* and is found from the southern side of the Hunter River in N.S.W. (except for an isolated location north of the River) down through N.S W. and Victoria, across the Bass Strait Isles into north eastern Tasmania where it is the only *Dockrillia* to be found on this Island. In Tasmania, it tends to grow near the sea on granite boulders with plants stronger than the mainland form. Flowers are larger and more golden yellow. In Victoria, it is very common and grows on granite and porphyry rock surfaces while in N.S.W. where it is also very common, it grows on sandstone rock. It grows most prolifically from the Illawarra region in southern N.S.W. and finishes at the Hunter Valley which acts as a barrier for many orchid species. The Tasmanian orchid has recently been re-classified as *Dockrillia chrysantha.*

While it can be found at sea level, it prefers the mountain ranges up to around 1000 metres altitude and follows these ranges inland for some distance. It is a lithophyte (grows on rocks) although there have been reports of it growing on *Euca/yptus* trees. The plant has creeping rhizomes and branching wiry stems which, when lying horizontally, freely produce roots that penetrate crevices and hollows where litter collects. Many plants grow to form huge masses overhanging the rock faces. It grows in very exposed positions and can withstand bright light and hot days but does need some shade against the afternoon sun. Leaves are numerous, terete-shaped, slightly curved and faintly ribbed and are a light green to dark purple colour. If grown in an exposed position the leaves take on a reddish hue.

Flowering occurs from September to December with the flowers growing either singly or in pairs. Flowers are about 2cm in diameter, coloured greenish yellow to golden yellow with brown striations and a white labellum. They become very fragrant in warm weather. An easy orchid to grow, *Dockrillia striolata* likes a temperate to cool climate. Water well in the Summer and keep only slightly moist in the Winter to avoid drying out completely. It can withstand really cold temperatures as is experienced in some of its growing areas. Cultivation can be on slabs (cork, hardwood etc.) or in a pot with good drainage. Hang up high to

allow for its pendulous habit. If grown properly it can look very nice in a hanging basket even when not in flower. A weak feeding programme during its growing period is beneficial. *Dockrillia striolata* forms a natural cross with *Dockrillia pugioniformis* to form *Dockrillia* X *duffy.*

GOOD GROWING!

COMING EVENTS 2013

5-6 April Castle Hill Orchid Fair Castle Hill Showground, Castle Hill

13-14 April Collectors' Plant Fair Hawkesbury Racecourse, Racecourse Rd, Clarendon

17-19 May Orchids Out West Hawkesbury Racecourse, Racecourse Rd, Clarendon

29-30 June Mingara Orchid Fair Mingara Recreation Club, Mingara Drive, Tumbi Umbi

9-11 August National Orchid Extravaganza Ellerman Park, Round Corner, Dural

16-18 August St Ives Orchid Fair St Ives Showground

4-6 October Southern Orchid Spectacular Caringbah High School, Cnr Willarong Rd & Taren Point Rd, Caringbah

For those of you who attended the Plant fair up in the Bilpin area a couple of years back, please note 13 – 14 April date above..lots of unusual plants here..well worth a look!